Landslide Atlas of Kerala – Thrivikramji.K.P., Department of Geology, University of Kerala, Trivandrum. (E-mail:thrivikramji@gmail.com)

The Landslide Atlas of Kerala authored by Sajin Kumar, K.S. and Thomas Oommen was released on 19th September 2017 at function held in the Seminar hall of the Department of Geology, University of Kerala, Kariavattom Campus. A draft copy of the atlas was presented to Dr. P.K. Thampi (formerly of CESS, Trivandrum) by Dr. Srikumar Chattopadhyay (currently in CDS, Trivandrum).

Veteran geotechnologists, serving geoscientists in the Central and State Government Agencies (such as the Geological Survey of India, Central Ground Water Board, Directorate of Mining and Geology, National Centre for Earth Science Studies, State Ground Water Department, and several colleges) and the campus community including academics, research scholars and students numbering over 90 participated in the function.

Prof. A.P. Pradeep Kumar (the Head of Department of Geology) started the session with a formal welcome, followed by presidential remarks by Prof. S.N. Kumar (Director, School of Earth System Sciences, University of Kerala).

Prof. Thomas Oommen (Michigan Technological University) introduced the Atlas to the audience, while Dr. Thrivikramji, K.P. (Professor Emeritus in Geology representing the Geological Society of India) in his remarks underscored the need for such an atlas in the state of Kerala that borders the westerly slopes of the southern Western Ghats (SWG).

Dr. Thrivikramji added that parts of the SWG in Kerala in the Anthropocene evolved into a cocktail of ESAs, biosphere reserves, tropical rain forests, plantations of tea, cardamom, pepper etc. at higher altitudes and rubber in lower altitudes. Moreover, this tract is also home to the tropical monsoon climate branded by the SW monsoon season beginning June 1st of every year. Further, a sizable population is settled in small and medium towns connected by single carriage

ways and occasionally single lane roads. The rainfall during the SW monsoon is a curse as well as a gift of nature, in that the landslips, debris slides, topsoil displacement etc. damages property and plantations, and occasionally in loss of life; but fills large reservoirs with water for hydro-electric power generation and for irrigation in Kerala as well as in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Thrivikramji emphasized that this atlas will enliven in the minds of people settled on the slopes of the SWG, the hidden risks to life and property more or less routinely accompanying the SW monsoon rains. Further, this atlas will be one of the scientific inputs for policy makers and administrators in charge of development activities and service delivery to the small and medium towns along the valleys in the SWG.

Dr. Thrivikramji also noted that the Geological Society of India (GSI), Bengaluru will be immensely pleased if the Department of Geology of the University initiated a series of workshops to educate, instill and inspire the minds of elected members and officials of the LSG's on the innards of slope instability-rainfall couple and how to minimize and may be to avoid incidence of slope failure in the future decades.

The Atlas was released formally, when Dr. Chathopadhyaya unwrapped a draft copy and handed over to Dr. Thampi. This was immediately followed by words of facilitation by Prof. P.M. Radhamony (Member of the Syndicate, University of Kerala), Sri C. Muraleedharan (Dy. D.G., Geological Survey of India, Kerala Unit), and Sri. Ramachandran Potti (Managing Director, VIVID Corporation Ltd, Trivandrum).

Dr. Sajin Kumar K.S, thanked the GSI, Bangalore for online publication of the 'Landslide Atlas of Kerala' and also the audience for participation.